

THE LIGUORIAN

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Devoted to the Growth of Catholic Belief and Practice*

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The Child And Its Mother.

Whence is this heavenly
Vision of light,—
Babe divine, starlike,
Illuming this night?
Face all resplendent,
Starlets for eyes,—
Baby hands feeble,
Though poisoning the skies;
Arms wide extended,
All men to enfold,—
Or is He dreaming
The Cross to behold?
Soft as His crooning,
Yet hill and dale wake,—
Did not that voice on
Forebeing's night break?
Swathing bands gird Him.
Scarce shield Him this night,—
Who, on high, thrones in
Unbearable light!
Breezes enchanted,
Play with His locks;
Wild flowers peep o'er
The wondering rocks.
Formed Thee, who made Thee,
O Baby Divine?
What mind devised those
Sweet features of Thine?
'Twas God's own Spirit
With infinite art,
Carved that fair form from
Our Lady's pure heart.
Mother, turn toward us
Thy face lit with joy:
Yes,—eyes and smile tell us,—
This is your Boy!

—AUGUSTINE ZELLER, C. Ss. R.

LOYALTY OF CATHOLICS VINDICATED.

THE CHARGE.

Since the time of our Divine Saviour until the present day no accusation has been more frequently made against the Catholics than that they cannot be good Catholics and at the same time loyal citizens of the state. We are charged with owing a divided allegiance. On the one hand, as Catholics, we are obliged to submit to the authority of the Pope, a foreign ruler; and on the other hand, as subjects of the state we owe the civil authority our allegiance. These duties must necessarily conflict, and hence it is impossible for a Catholic to be a good consistent Catholic and at the same time a loyal patriotic citizen. They go further and declare that every Catholic is a traitor to his country, that we are plotting the destruction of the Government, that the priests are spies for the Pope, that they have organized a military body of hundreds of thousands, that they have guns hidden in the basements of the churches, and that at a moment's notice they will rise up against the Government, expel the President from the White House and call in the Pope to rule the land.

Now if these accusations are true we Catholics deserve to be driven from the land, and not one of the sixteen millions which the Church claims in the country should be allowed to remain.

But are they true? I claim most emphatically that they are absolutely false. I claim that the duty of allegiance to the Pope does not conflict with the duties of true citizenship; that the Pope claims and exercises no civil authority over the Catholics of the United States; that the authority which he does claim is only spiritual.

DISPROVED BY EUROPEAN THEOLOGIANs.

History states that at the time when the question of Catholic emancipation came up before the British Parliament at the beginning of the last century, William Pitt, then Prime Minister of England, wishing to ascertain whether Catholic loyalty to the Church would in any way conflict with loyalty to the state, submitted to the six leading Catholic universities of Europe the following questions: 1. Can the Pope with the Cardinals or the Bishops or any body of men in the Church or any individual Catholic, absolve an English Catholic subject from his oath of allegiance to the Government and the royal crown? 2. Is there any tenet of the Catholic doctrine which will justify a Catholic in failing to keep faith with a heretic either in a public or private capacity?

Now, the answer given by these six great theological schools to the questions proposed by the Prime Minister were identically the same:

1. That neither the Pope nor the Cardinals nor Bishops nor any body of men in the Church nor any individual Catholic can ever absolve a British subject from his oath of allegiance to the state and to the royal crown. 2. That no Catholic is ever justified in breaking faith with heretics either in a public or private capacity.

This answer of the universities gives us the authoritative teaching of the most eminent Catholic theologians on the question of Catholics' allegiance to the state. Satisfied with the answer Mr. Pitt and the British Government passed the Catholic Emancipation Act in favor of the Catholics of England.

DISPROVED BY AMERICAN THEOLOGIAN.

Now let us see the teaching of American Catholic theologians. Does it coincide with that of those on the Continent, of those great universities?

In the year 1866 all the Bishops and Archbishops of the United States assembled in the second plenary council at Baltimore, addressed a joint pastoral letter to the priests and laity of the Church throughout the country, in which they speak as follows: "The enemies of the Church charge her with teaching treason to civil authority and seeking to win over the civil allegiance of Catholic subjects of this land. But we know that the Church has ever taught that the allegiance she demands of her subjects is only spiritual, pertaining to matters relating to the soul; and that furthermore, she has ever taught that Catholics as subjects of the state owe obedience and submission to the civil authority and must defend national institutions."

From this let us go to a higher source whence to derive the true teaching of the Catholic Church regarding the duty of civil allegiance.

DISPROVED BY LEO XIII.

The late Pope Leo XIII in an encyclical letter addressed to all the Catholics of all the nations of the world, treating on the relation of Church and State, declares that both powers, the civil of the State and the spiritual of the Church, have their origin from God; that civil rulers are bound in the exercise of their authority to respect the law of God; that the Church has authority only in matters that pertain to the spiritual welfare of mankind in all things that tend to their eternal happiness in heaven; that there need be no clash or opposition between these two

powers, if each keeps within the lines of its own limited authority and respects the authority of the other.

Hence according to the teaching of the Pope the Catholics of the United States as well as all the world have to respect and obey the civil authority, as established by Almighty God Himself. They are in duty bound to render entire submission to the authority of the State, and to defend the State if need be, even with their very lives. This is a duty taught them by the very religion which the enemies of the Catholic Church declare requires of them treason towards the State. We, as Catholics, must then believe that as we are bound to submit to the spiritual authority of the Church in all matters pertaining to faith and morals, so in all civil and political matters we are bound to give unreserved submission and obedience to civil authority. Were the Catholic Church to interfere with our duty of allegiance to the State, were the Pope to plot against the United States Government commanding the bishops and priests to rise up in rebellion against it in order that He might come over and be the ruler of the land, I, as a Catholic Priest, here publicly declare that I refuse to obey; and I am sure that every Catholic throughout the land would do the same, because the Pope has no right to order obedience in a matter of such a nature. On the contrary, he would be commanding us to do what is wrong and what is in direct opposition to the teaching of our holy religion. But there is no more probability of the Pope's issuing such a command than there is of the inhabitants of Mars coming in air ships to conquer this world.

I. OBJECTION REFUTED.

But, we are told, that facts speak louder than words and that history disproves our claims to fidelity in yielding civil allegiance. The history of the Middle Ages shows us that the Popes and bishops exercised temporal power over the people and even over princes and emperors, that they excommunicated emperors, deprived them of their power and absolved the people from their oath of allegiance. All this we admit is a fact. But to understand it aright we must not judge the Middle Ages by conditions that prevail in our own more enlightened and civilized times. The Middle Ages have succeeded that awful period in European history known as the invasion of the barbarians, when barbarous hordes from the North and East swept down in millions and destroyed every vestige of Roman civilization. These wild savages could be tamed and were tamed only by the power of Rome. The Catholic Church took this unpromising material in hand and she converted

these barbarians to her faith; she civilized them as best she could; she restored peace to those that were at war, and she demanded justice of the mighty in dealing with the lowly. Now all Europe was Catholic; all nations and all governments recognized the Pope as the head of God's Church and acknowledged his spiritual supremacy. Even the emperors were in things spiritual subject to the Pope. When, therefore, they oppressed people and ground them down under the iron heel of despotism, when they were guilty of heinous crimes that scandalized the nation and persisted in their crimes, then the Pope exercised his spiritual authority which he held over the nations and kings. He demanded that these wicked emperors should cease their wicked ways and be converted; and if they refused they were excommunicated from the Church and the people declared themselves no longer subject to such rulers.

This was a natural consequence of conditions that prevailed in those days. It was a necessity of the times and it was acknowledged and accepted among all nations. I could quote to you passages from learned Protestant historians treating of this period of history in which they speak in terms of highest praise of the beneficial influences wielded by the Popes and bishops in the Middle Ages in the interest of the people. Cannon Farrar, an Anglican minister, who was spiritual advisor of Queen Victoria, a man whose historic learning is acknowledged, declares that every vestige of civil liberty that we now enjoy and all the rights which any citizen can now claim in any nation of Europe can be traced back in a clear unbroken stream to the influence of the Papacy upon the nations of Europe in the Middle Ages. The same testimony is rendered by Samuel Laing, a Scotch traveler and historian. Others too numerous to mention can be adduced, Protestants eminent for their learning, who declare the same. No charge can be substantiated against the Catholics which declares that they are traitors to their country. But actions, we are told, speak louder than words.

II. OBJECTION REFUTED.

Look at your Catholics in this country plotting against the Government; they are traitors. In answer I defy anyone to point out to me a single Catholic in the history of the country for the last four hundred years who with the authority of the Church or the approval or connivance of any Bishop or Priest has ever proven himself a traitor to the country or her institutions. On the contrary I can point out

hundreds of loyal citizens who were devout Catholics and whose religion taught them to be patriotic citizens. Charles Carroll of Carrollton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, who risked a fortune greater than that of all the other signers united, was a devout Catholic. The teachings of his Church made him a loyal citizen. Then in the war of the Revolution thousands of Catholics fought for the independence of this country and General Washington at the close of the war gave public expression to his appreciation of their loyalty and their bravery in conflict! Nay, more; I am convinced that if it were not for the valor of Catholic soldiers in the War of the Revolution that the United States Government would not exist today. For that dreary winter when Washington had his army at Valley Forge, when they were reduced to the last extremity and the poor soldiers treading bare-foot in the cold snow left their bloodstained footprints, when they were clothed in tattered rags with scarcely food to eat, and Washington was in despondency over the outlook—at that dark hour there came to the assistance of the American patriots reinforcements, arms and provisions from the Catholic nation of France, led by the Catholic generals LaFayette and Rochambeau. Had it not been for the assistance lent by these Catholics in all probability Washington would have had to surrender to the English army.

But we are told that we are traitors to the country. Come down to the history of our Civil War. Where were the traitors there? General Phil Sheridan was a Catholic. General Rosecrans, perhaps the greatest military genius in the army, was likewise a Catholic. There were several regiments engaged in the war consisting entirely of Catholic soldiers. Come down to the Spanish American War, when we were fighting against a Catholic nation, and ask Colonel Roosevelt what the Catholics did. And only recently when our soldiers invaded Vera Cruz, Mexico, when ten of these soldiers were killed, the first man to be killed was a Catholic, and six of the entire ten were Roman Catholics.

"FATHER FORGIVE THEM."

It is pitiful to think that the slanderous charge of treason hurled against the Catholics comes not merely from the ignorant and uneducated but also from those whose training would justify us in expecting better treatment of Catholics. Men who were supposed to be highly educated and even learned—ministers of the gospel, villify the Catholic Church and repeat these slanderous charges. Alas for those who are

ignorant and who know no better, who believe in their hearts that we are guilty as charged—for these we cannot but feel the greatest of pity and pray Almighty God to enlighten them. As to those who are swayed by bitter prejudice and deep rooted hatred for the Catholic Church, whose hearts are hardened in this animosity—toward them it is indeed a difficult task to exercise charity. But such nevertheless is our duty, and we must pray to the Father to forgive them, for they know not what they do, to soften their hard hearts and give light to their blinded eyes.

GEORGE MAHONY, C. SS. R.

QUALITIES OF FAITH.

St. Paul says that we are "justified by faith" (Rom. 5, 1), and that "the just man liveth by faith" (Rom. 1, 17). This is perfectly true of a living and practical faith. Our faith should be something more than a lifeless and sterile adhesion of our mind to the truths of divine revelation defined by the Church. Our faith, to be acceptable to God, should possess certain indispensable qualities.

1. The first of these necessary qualities is firmness. Our faith should be endowed with both interior and exterior firmness. The doctrines of faith, having been revealed by the infallible God through His infallible Church, are most certainly true. There is not the slightest possibility of mistake or deception in accepting them. Their certainty immeasurably surpasses every other kind of certainty. Therefore, there cannot be any room for the least wavering or hesitation in adhering to them. On the contrary, the deeper, the more obscure, the more incomprehensible the truths of faith are to us, the more certain we should be that they are revealed by God who knows all things, and the more firmly we should believe them. Were all the truths of faith within the reach of our limited understanding, there would be no necessity of their being divinely revealed. It is quite natural that God in revealing some truths to mankind, should teach and make known things far above the grasp of man's natural faculties, which are, indeed, very limited. The least wilful doubt or hesitation in believing the truths we know to pertain to divine revelation, is a practical denial of God's truthfulness and a very sinful rebellion against His supreme authority.

Moreover, our words and our actions must all correspond to a

firm interior faith, so that we may openly and unmistakably profess that we firmly believe all the truths of faith. "With the heart we believe unto justice," says St. Paul, "but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10, 10). Any wilful word or act of ours that would lead others to imagine that we have no faith, or that we are doubting or wavering in our faith, would be scandalous, for it would be, as it were, a public denial of our faith, an insult to God's truthfulness and a rebellion against His authority. Whenever the glory of God, or the spiritual welfare of ourselves or of our neighbor requires it, we are bound to make open profession of a firm faith, and to defend it without wavering or hesitation, as St. Peter did with his wonted energy and sincerity: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known, that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God" (John 6, 69, 70).

2. Our faith should also be universal; that is, we must believe *all* that the Holy Catholic Church teaches, without a single exception. The Catholic Church is infallible and cannot teach error. If we disbelieve or reject a single one of her decisions in matters of faith, we commit a grievous sin, for we thereby impugn her infallibility, and practically charge God Himself with deception, and rebel against His authority. Let us bear in mind that faith is not and cannot be a matter of choice. God, being, infinitely just, can no more give us the liberty to believe what we choose, than He can permit us to act as we choose. Those who believe only what they choose, have no faith whatever, but only fallible human opinions; they cannot thereby please God, but, according to our divine Saviour's saying, they are already judged (John 3, 18), and will most assuredly be condemned, unless they hear the Church (Mat. 18, 17), and accept all that she teaches.

3. Our faith should, like truth, be genuine and unadulterated. Truth is intolerant and exclusive of error; the least adulteration of truth changes truth into error. For instance, ten times ten are one hundred. This truth admits of no adulteration; if you adulterate it, however slightly, you fall into error. If you would say, ten times ten are ninety-nine and seven-eighths, or one hundred and one-eighth, that would be wrong, would be an error. So long as you do not say always and exactly, "ten times ten are one hundred," you are wrong. A genuine faith is, therefore, both intolerant and exclusive of error, of false principles, of false doctrines; it excludes all change whatever; the slightest change or adulteration in it, would make it erroneous and un-

true, and it would thus cease to be God's genuine revelation. Just as there cannot be two Gods, so also there cannot be two contradictory revelations, two contradictory divine faiths, for St. Paul says expressly: "One God, one faith" (Eph. 4, 5). The Catholic Church has been proved by the most conclusive arguments to be the true Church of Jesus Christ; hence, all the other so-called churches are necessarily false. Since the Catholic faith is the true faith, every other belief or creed, whatever be its name, is necessarily false and leads, not to eternal bliss, but to everlasting reprobation (Mark 16, 16). We cannot be true and genuine Catholics without being intolerant and exclusive in matters of faith; we are bound to believe whatever the Catholic Church believes and teaches, and to reject and condemn whatever she rejects and condemns. Our very salvation depends upon it.

4. Our faith must also be endowed with constancy and fortitude. It behooves us always and everywhere, under all circumstances, in prosperity and in adversity, in abundance and in want, amid joy and amid persecution, in life and in death, to cling steadfastly to our faith and to practise it courageously. We should, like St. Paul, prefer our faith to everything in this world: "I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord" (Phil. 3, 8). The Catholic faith is constant and unchangeable; why should we be inconstant and changing? Rather than ever waver in or renounce our faith, we should, after the example of millions of martyrs and confessors, be ready, for the sake of our faith, to sacrifice our goods, our liberty, our honor, our very life. We deservedly admire the noble constancy of the martyrs in enduring confiscation, imprisonment, slavery, the rack, boiling oil, the sword, the cross, wild beasts, the gridiron and every conceivable torment. But in enduring all these cruelties, in sacrificing all things to preserve their faith, they merely performed their duty. If we are true Catholics, we must be ready to imitate their constancy and fortitude and to undergo similar sufferings rather than renounce our faith, for our faith should be dearer to us than all the natural goods we possess, than our very life.

5. Lastly, our faith must be practical, It is very doubtful whether we shall ever be called upon to die for our faith; but there is no doubt that we are all obliged "to live our faith". Faith, to be profitable, must be a living faith, that is, it must, by its actions, give evident signs of life. A dead faith, a faith that gives no sign of life, can be of no benefit for salvation, for says St. James (2, 17-26): "Faith, if it hath

not works, is dead in itself. . . . For even as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead." "The just man," says St. Paul, "liveth by faith" (Rom. 1, 17). The just man is such only by the performance of good and holy works. But it is through supernatural faith that a man's works become holy and endowed with justice. The just man, then, lives by faith, that is, he is and remains a just man through his faith, which is the principle and inspiring agent of his good and holy works. Therefore, faith to be profitable to salvation must be practical, accompanied by good works. These works are no other than those prescribed by the commandments of God and of His Church. Faith teaches that God is our Creator and sovereign Lord, whom we are bound to obey in all things which He has commanded us. It teaches also that the Catholic Church has been founded by Jesus Christ and invested by Him with the powers and means necessary to lead men to heaven, and that we are obliged, under the pain of forfeiting our salvation, to submit to her laws. "Let him that will not hear the Church be to thee as the heathen and publican." "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me." Therefore, he who despises the authority of the Church, despises the authority of Jesus Christ Himself.

Hence, that man has a lively practical faith, who faithfully keeps the commandments of God and of His Church. To keep them, we must avoid what they forbid and perform what they prescribe. Let us, first, examine what is forbidden by a practical faith.

All wilful hesitation or doubt is inconsistent with true faith. True faith, moreover, forbids us to do or say anything tending to approve or countenance heresy or unbelief. Some weak-minded Catholics, through ignorance or human respect, not only tolerate, but even advocate certain false maxims contrary to faith, such as these: "It matters not what a man believes; provided he is honest and does no injury to his neighbor, he cannot be lost. We all serve one and the same God; it matters not in which religion; we shall all be saved in the end." These and all similar maxims are utterly false and opposed to the true faith. The weak-kneed Catholics who advocate them, do not, it is true, intend thereby to renounce their faith, but wish only to avoid displeasing their non-Catholic friends. They wish to avoid bitter disputes and giving pain to their friends, and, consequently, coincide with their erroneous views. But do these Catholics always act thus in business matters, in politics? When their temporal interests are at stake, are

they so yielding, so condescending, or rather do they not then stick obstinately to their own views and courageously maintain their rights? But when their faith is assailed, when the interests of God and of their Mother, the Holy Catholic Church, are at stake, they act the part of a craven, and, to avoid giving displeasure to their *friends*, they betray their faith, that sacred and priceless treasure! Why do you try so hard, we may ask them, to please mortal men at the peril of your own soul and at the risk of grievously displeasing and offending the Almighty? What have these men done for you? Have they ever shed their blood and sacrificed their life for you? And, if you thus deservedly fall a victim to the divine justice, what can those men do to rescue you? What a shame, what a disgrace for you, who claim to be a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, to prefer such men to Jesus Christ, your Saviour, your greatest Benefactor! Remember this saying of the Son of God: "He that shall deny Me before men, him will I deny before My Father who is in heaven" (Mat. 10, 33).

A Catholic is also untrue to his faith whenever, without a just motive sanctioned by the Church, he reads infidel books or papers, or the Protestant Bible, which is not the genuine Word of God on account of its suppressions and alterations. He who would seek to justify himself for doing so under the pretext that this sort of reading is harmless to him, shows clearly that his faith is already weak and wavering. He who has really a strong and lively faith, does not tolerate such matter in his house, nor defile with it his hands, his eyes or his mind. Reading being food for the mind, heretical and infidel reading cannot fail to instil into the reader's mind the deadly poison of false doctrines and erroneous principles. Those who read such productions evidently prove, that in matters of faith, they are guided, not by the teachings of Jesus Christ and His Church, but by the accursed spirit of "so-called tolerance!" Whatever may be said to the contrary, the reading of erroneous doctrines, especially if frequent or habitual, always proves highly injurious even in superficial reading, because some of the poison will always "stick".

The Catholic faith forbids the approval, even if only tacit, of any heretical worship or anti-religious association. It is, therefore, sinful to assist at heretical preaching or divine service, or to go to hear infidel lectures. Catholics may not, without serious reasons, approved by their confessor or pastor, assist at baptisms, marriages or funerals, at which heretical ministers officiate. It is not only sinful, but even

highly scandalous to take an active part in any heretical, Jewish or other false worship, by playing the organ or singing at the services. The same applies to contributions, entertainments for the erection or support of heretical churches, synagogues, or masonic temples, or non-Catholic missions, and the like. Although Catholics, in bestowing alms, should not discriminate with regard to the religious belief of the necessitous, they should, nevertheless, guard against upholding heresy and error by their generosity. We should never lose sight of the fact that faith, like truth, is necessarily intolerant and exclusive of error, and that, therefore, a true Catholic will never compromise in matters of faith, for such a compromise is equivalent to a denial of the faith.

FERREOL GIRARDEY, C. Ss. R.

ST. ALPHONSUS' METHOD OF MEDITATION.

For the exercise of mental prayer it is well to follow some approved method. The method of St. Alphonsus is a very commendable one because it is both simple and practical. He divides the meditation into three parts: the preparation, the consideration, and the conclusion. With regard to the preparation he says: Endeavor to dispose both soul and body for this important exercise. Dismiss all distracting thoughts and say what St. Bernard said on entering a church: "Remain here all you earthly and distracting thoughts. I may have leisure for you after meditation".

Recite briefly an act of faith in the presence of God, together with profound adoration of His infinite majesty. Humbly ask pardon for your past offences and beg for light and grace to make your meditation well. Recommend yourself to the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, your Guardian Angel and your holy patrons. These acts must be very fervent but brief so as to proceed at once with the consideration. For the meditation proper it is good to use a book at least in the beginning so as to hold the attention on the subject for consideration. Pause from time to time when you are particularly impressed in order that like the bee you may extract honey from the flower, or like the dove take a drink and then look up to heaven before taking another.

The importance of mental prayer, however, consists not so much in the consideration as in the affections, petitions, and resolutions which must accompany it. The consideration may be likened to a needle,

and the affections, petitions, and resolutions are the thread of gold that follows it. The affections will consist of short and fervent acts of humility, confidence, and gratitude; frequently repeat aspirations of love and contrition for these are links of the golden chain that unites the soul to God. One act of perfect love is sufficient to obtain the pardon of all your sins. "Charity covereth a multitude of sins," says St. Peter (1, 4, 8). St. Thomas teaches that every act of love merits a new degree of glory. Perhaps the most important part of the meditation are the petitions which you address to God. The Lord loves to be importuned and therefore never weary asking Him for light and grace, for conformity to His holy will, and perseverance in good; above all things beg Him earnestly to grant you His holy love. With love, says St. Francis de Sales, we receive all other graces.

Before the Venerable Father Segneri studied theology, he contented himself while at meditation with considerations and affections; but finally says he himself, "God opened my eyes and from that time on I devoted myself to petitions, and if there is aught of good in me now I owe it to this beautiful custom." Follow the example of this holy man and ask in the name of Jesus Christ for all the graces you need, for God has promised to hear and answer your prayers: "Amen, amen, I say to you: if you ask the Father any thing in my name He will give it you" (Jn. 16, 23). At the end of meditation proper it is very useful to make a special resolution to avoid some particular fault or to be more zealous in the practice of a particular virtue. This resolution must be repeated until the desired end is attained. Outside the time of meditation we must endeavor to profit by the opportunities afforded to carry out our resolutions.

The conclusion of the meditation consists in the following acts: First thank God for the enlightenment you have received; secondly, express your determination to carry out the resolutions you have made; thirdly, ask the heavenly Father, for the love of Jesus and Mary, to grant you the grace to be faithful to your resolutions.

It is a beautiful custom at the end of meditation to recommend to God the souls in purgatory and all poor sinners. "Nothing," says St. John Chrysostom, "proves our love for Jesus Christ better than the zeal we have to pray for our brethren." St. Francis de Sales counsels us to gather a little spiritual nosegay from the meditation and to enjoy its perfume through the day. He wishes to say that we should select one or two thoughts that have impressed us in the morning meditation,

and recall them frequently during the day to reanimate our fervor and to preserve the fruit of the morning meditation.

If you are annoyed at distractions during mental prayer recall to mind the words of St. Francis de Sales: "If you are occupied during the whole meditation in fighting distractions and temptations you will have made a good meditation. The Lord looks to the good intention we have and the effort we make, and these He rewards". In another place He says: "In prayer we must not seek the delights of God but the God of delights". "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you" (Mt. 7, 7). "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth" (Kgs. 3, 9).

C. J. WARREN C. Ss. R.

FATHER TIM CASEY.

In Reverend Timothy Casey's church, three o'clock Sunday afternoon was the hour appointed for Baptism.

On the particular Sunday afternoon of which I write it was already a quarter to four; the Baptisms were finished, and the lusty squalls of the last baby had died away in the distance, as the two servers, Leo Trost and Dave Regan, hung up their cassocks and came to help Father Casey put away the articles used for the ceremony.

"Father," broke in impetuous Dave, "I have served for Baptisms hundreds of times, and even now I can hardly help laughing—the Priest does so many funny things to the baby. You poke salt into its mouth, and you rub oil on its chest, and you blow your breath in its eye, and you—"

"Here, here, Dave! Would you dare to make fun of such a sacred thing as a sacrament?"

"Father, I didn't mean to say anything wrong. But when you baptize a baby, you really do all these things, and they look so funny to me."

"The ceremonies of Baptism would cease to look funny to you, David, my boy, if you would but direct your attention to their beautiful mystical signification."

"Wha—what did you say, Father?"

"I said, 'mystical signification'."

"Oh!"

"Listen, Dave; I'm going to teach you the meaning of those big words: In front of St. Mary's school there is a big, long stick stuck in the ground. They come out very seriously with a great piece of red and white striped cloth, that has a bunch of stars in one corner, and sometimes they fasten that cloth to the top of the stick, and sometimes they fasten it half way down. Doesn't that look funny to you, too?"

"Oh I know; you mean the flag! Sometimes we fly it at peak and sometimes at half mast. No, Father, that doesn't look funny, because it means something."

"In other words, Dave, it has a mystical signification; so have the ceremonies in Baptism. If you boys," he added in a bantering tone, "took enough interest in your religion to remain here and learn something about it instead of running away to play ball, I might find time some day to teach you the mystical signification of the ceremonies of Baptism."

"Oh Father," interposed Leo, "we'd be glad to stay right now!"

"Would you, you little rascals? Don't I know as well as you that it is too muddy to play ball today, and that is why you are so willing to stay? Well, bring me the Ritual—that little Latin book that I use for Baptisms and Sick Calls.

"Strictly speaking," began the Priest, "the godparents should stop outside the door of the church with the baby to signify that original sin keeps the child from being a member of the true religion, just as it kept Adam and Eve out of Paradise and keeps man out of heaven. The Priest meets them at the door, wearing about his neck, over the cassock and surplice, a stole of violet—the color of mourning—mourning for the soul of that child that is dead in sin. He asks what the child wants there before the door of the church. '*John*' he says (we will suppose that they want to call the baby John), '*what dost thou ask of the Church of God?*' John cannot speak, therefore, in his name, the godparents answer, '*Faith*'. '*What*,' continues the Priest, '*will faith bring thee to?*' They reply, '*Life everlasting*.' '*If therefore you wish to enter into life everlasting*,' continues the Priest (you see I am giving you the English translation of the Latin words used by the Priest), '*keep the commandments, love the Lord your God, with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and your neighbor as yourself*.'

"Then he continues: '*Depart from him, unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete*,' at the same time blowing his

breath thrice in the child's face to signify the coming of the Holy Spirit. In Latin, the same word, 'spiritus', means both spirit and breath. His action likewise signifies how God's Minister contemns the devil—blows him aside as if he were a fleck of dust or a straw.

"*'Receive,'* he continues, *'the sign of the cross upon your forehead and in your heart: put your faith in the heavenly precepts; and let your conduct be such as to enable you to be a temple of God,'* and he makes the sacred sign of the cross upon the little body wherein God will come to dwell as in a temple, just as we place a cross upon a building which we erect as a house of God. Probably, too, the cross which the Priest traces upon the brow of the child represents the sign with which, Scripture tells us, the Angels will sign those who are to be saved.

"The Priest then says this prayer: *'Let us pray. We beseech Thee, O Lord, mercifully hear our prayers, and guard with Thy unfailing strength this, Thy servant, John, who has been marked with the sign of the Saviour's cross, that, observing the rudiments of the greatness of Thy Glory, by the fulfilment of Thy commands, he may deserve to attain to the glory of regeneration. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.'* Here he lays his hand on the child's head. This is done in memory of our Lord who, when healing the sick, touched them with his hand; also because, in the Bible, the laying on of hands signifies blessing and the infusion of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

"The next prayer is translated thus: *'Let us pray. Almighty, Eternal God, Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, deign to look down upon Thy servant John whom Thou hast deigned to call to the rudiments of Faith; drive all blindness from his heart; burst the bonds of Satan by which he was bound; open to him, O Lord, the gate of Thy mercy, that, signed with the sign of Thy wisdom, he may be free from the stench of cupidity, and gladly serve Thee in Thy Church in the sweet odor of Thy commandments, and make progress from day to day. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.'*

"Then he puts a few grains of salt into the child's mouth, saying: *'John, receive the salt of wisdom; may it be to thee propitiation unto life everlasting. Amen. Peace be with thee. And with thy spirit.'* This salt must be blessed because magicians have desecrated salt by using it in their black arts. Salt is given to him because it signifies wisdom, and Baptism will impart to him the highest of all wisdom, the gift of faith. Salt likewise signifies friendship; in ancient times to eat

of a man's salt meant to become his friend forever, and in Baptism we become the friends of Christ. Salt is used to keep things from spoiling, and the graces received in Baptism will help to keep us from being spoiled by sin. This application of salt also signifies spiritual health, for, in olden times, the Hebrew doctors insisted that, as a precaution against disease, every new born child should be entirely rubbed with salt."

"Gee," whispered Dave, "I'd hate to be a little salted Hebrew!"

"The Priest proceeds: *'Let us pray. O God of our fathers, God, author of all truth, we humbly beseech Thee, look down with compassion upon this Thy servant John who has for the first time tasted of this food of salt, permit not that he perish of hunger, but rather let him be satiated with heavenly food, fervent in spirit, rejoicing in hope, ever serving Thy name. Lead him, O Lord, we beseech Thee, to the fount of the new regeneration, that, together with Thy faithful ones, he may deserve to attain to Thy promised eternal rewards. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.'*

"*'I exorcise you, unclean spirit, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, that you go out and depart from this servant of God. Accursed and condemned spirit, may He command you who walked on the waters of the sea and extended His right hand to sinking Peter. Therefore, accursed devil, acknowledge your sentence, and give glory to the living and true God, give glory to Jesus Christ His Son, and to the Holy Ghost, and depart from this servant of God John, because God Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has deigned to call him to Himself, to His holy grace, and to benediction and the fount of Baptism. And never dare, accursed devil, to violate this sign of the holy cross with which we sign him. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.'*

"*'Let us pray. We humbly implore, Holy Lord, Almighty Father, Eternal God, Thy eternal and most just mercy upon this Thy servant John, that Thou wouldst deign to enlighten him with the light of Thy wisdom, to purify and sanctify him: give him true wisdom, that, having been made worthy of the grace of Thy Baptism, he may hold fast to firm hope, right counsel, and holy doctrine. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.'* During these prayers the Priest repeats the laying on of hands and the signing with the sign of the cross, and, in some countries, he adds a prayer begging God to assign a Guardian Angel to the person about to be baptized. Finally he lays the end of his stole on the baby's

head and introduces the child into the church. *'Enter into the temple of God that thou mayest have a part with Christ in life everlasting. Amen.'* By thus spreading his stole over the baby the Priest signifies that holy Mother Church will protect her children from the attacks of the devil, just as the hen extends her wings over her chickens and protects them from the hawk. They walk to the baptismal fount, and, on the way, the godparents recite the *'I believe in God'*. This custom is derived from the practice prevalent in the early Church of requiring a public profession of faith of all adults before admission to Baptism. Having finished this prayer they say the *'Our Father'*, for, in the early Church, the candidates for Baptism had this prayer explained to them immediately before the water was poured on their heads.

"The great sacrament is about to be conferred, wherefore, once again, making frequent signs of the sacred cross, the Priest orders the devil to release forever this soul which he held captive so long as it was in original sin: *'I exorcise thee, every unclean spirit, in the name of God, the Father Almighty, and in the name of Jesus Christ, His Son, Our Lord and Judge, and in the power of the Holy Ghost, that thou depart from this creature of God, John, whom Our Lord has deigned to call to His holy temple, that he may be a temple of the Living God, and that the Holy Ghost may dwell within him. Through the same Christ Our Lord, who will come to judge the living and the dead, and the world by fire. Amen.'*

"Thereupon the Priest touches the ears and nostrils of the infant with spittle, saying: *'Ephpheta, which means, Be thou opened. In the odor of sweetness. But do thou, O devil, take flight, for the judgment of God is at hand.'* This ceremony reminds us of Jesus Christ who cured the dumb man by touching his tongue with spittle, and who cured the blind man by first rubbing his eyes with clay mixed with spittle and then sending him to wash in the pool of Siloe, just as the child is about to be washed in the baptismal fount.

"In the sacrament of Baptism the Great God adopts us as His children and creates us princes of His heavenly court. It is too clear that this high dignity cannot be conferred upon one who wishes to remain a child and a slave of the devil, hence the Priest asks: *'John, dost thou renounce Satan?' 'I do renounce him.' 'And all his works?' 'I do renounce them.' 'And all his pomps?' 'I do renounce them.'*

"He has renounced the devil; he is fit to be made a follower of Christ. The Priest takes oil which was solemnly consecrated by the

Bishop on Holy Thursday, and anoints the child on the breast and between the shoulders: *'I anoint thee with the oil of salvation in Christ Jesus Our Lord, that thou mayest have eternal life. Amen.'* The anointing on the breast signifies that he must always keep in his heart, faith in Christ and love for Christ; the anointing between the shoulders signifies that he must be prompt to labor and to bear every burden for Christ. Again, just as the warriors of old were rubbed with oil before going into the fight, so this anointing with oil signifies that the soul is prepared for the life-long struggle which it is about to begin with the devil.

"Now the Priest lays aside the purple stole of mourning; he thinks of the ineffable favor this child is about to receive, and instead of mourning for him he rejoices, and clothes himself with the white stole of joy; *'John, dost thou believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?'* *'I do believe.'* *'Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, Our Lord, who was born into this world, and who suffered for us?'* *'I do believe.'* *'Dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?'* *'I do believe.'* *'John, dost thou desire to be baptized?'* *'I do desire.'* *'John I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.'* And, simultaneously with these words, he pours water three distinct times on the head of the child in honor of the three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity. Here is the real conferring of the sacrament; all that preceded and all that will follow, are merely ceremonies placed about, like a bodyguard, to secure due reverence for this one sacred act.

The child is baptized. In one instant, by the divine power which Jesus Christ has given to this sacrament, the child has been transformed from a slave of the devil into a son of God and an heir of heaven. Just as kings were anointed with oil in days gone by, so the Priest traces the sign of the cross with holy chrism on the head of the newly-made Christian, to show that he shares in the kingly dignity of Christ: *May Almighty God, the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who regenerated you by water and the Holy Ghost, may He anoint you with the chrism of salvation in the same Christ Jesus Our Lord unto life everlasting. Amen. Peace be with thee. And with thy spirit.'*

"He then places on the child's head a white veil, saying: *'Receive this white garment, and see that thou bear it unstained before the tribunal of Our Lord Jesus Christ that thou mayest have life everlast-*

ing. Amen.' This veil represents the spotless garb of sanctifying grace in which the newly-baptized soul is clothed. In former days both men and women dressed entirely in white for a week after their Baptism. As a large number of adult Baptisms were always performed on the eve of Easter Sunday, the Sunday after Easter, when they laid aside their white garments, is still called 'Sunday in White'. Even today mothers in Europe prepare a little white cap which is put on the child for the first time immediately after the Priest has clothed it with the white veil. This a beautiful and significant custom for our own American mothers to imitate.

"Lastly the Priest presents the child with a lighted candle—symbol of the faith and love that should ever burn within the Christian heart: *'Receive this burning light and keep thy Baptism blameless: obey God's commandments so that, when the Lord comes to the marriage feast, you can hasten to meet Him in the heavenly banquet hall together with the Saints, and live for ever and ever. Amen. Go in peace, and the Lord be with thee. Amen.'*"

"I think," said Dave, "I'll feel more like praying than laughing the next time I serve at Baptism."

C. D. McENNIRY, C. Ss. R.

How often, when my neighbor meets with some extraordinary success, I feel a secret regret! How I would blush to have all the ugly thoughts in my heart made known to the world!

America quotes the following pregnant remark of the Chief Magistrate of the New York Municipal Courts; "The most fearful problem with which we have to deal is the horde of young men from sixteen to twenty-four who daily appear before us. Their number is daily increasing. Their, characteristic mark is an utter lack of reverence for man, for law, for conscience, and for God."

Brother Camille, a Redemptorist who died recently at St. Anne de Beaupre, once converted a Protestant lady from New York without saying a word to her. When asked why she wished to become a Catholic she said: "I saw Brother Camille praying; I saw him so good, so humble in his work, that I think his is the true religion. I want to pray as he does. I want to belong to Brother Camille's religion."

THE WISE MEN FROM THE EAST.—A Bible Study.

ST. MATHEW II, VS. 1-12.

Love and loyalty. In the First Epistle to Timothy, II, 3-4, St. Paul urges the Christians to pray for all men: "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a redemption for all." No one is so far from God that his grace cannot reach him. Just see how the Magi came from a land so far away; came to the little hill town of Judea; and there found the Child, that Herod with all his nearness to it, with all his troops and all his spies could not discover.

The East. What visions of gorgeous poetry and fantastic dreamland this name conjures up in our minds! Chaldea, Babylon, Assyria, Media, Persia! The student of history recalls the long file of mighty empires that rose mountain high in despotic pride, and were shivered into desolate ruins when the hour of God's judgment struck. About the time of Our Lord's birth two giant empires, huge and colossal, were grappling for the supremacy of the East. We all know the Roman empire well enough. Long ago had the prophet Daniel described it in that vision of the hideous beasts that filled our world with war and wretchedness indescribable. Rome there appears as the fourth beast, "terrible and wonderful and exceeding strong; it had great iron teeth; eating and breaking in pieces; and treading down the rest with its feet." Its present antagonist was the Parthian empire. As if by magic, great things sometimes spring from origins so small! So it was with the empire of the Parthians. History can scarcely trace its rise. Ancient writers call them "Scythians". Perhaps they were conquered by Cyrus about 550 B. C. In the next century they are subject to the Persians; and fought for them against the Greeks when Xerxes hurled his millions of men over the Hellespont. They fought against Alexander the Great and sought to stem the tide of his victories. But their land was overrun and their cities were plundered by the invincible Conqueror. Upon his death their mountain homes fell to the lot of the Seleucidian monarchs. Thus far the Parthians had fought for others; they had learned a lesson; and now they will stand for themselves. History must own that they made a splendid stand. Under Antiochus II, called Theos (the God), they raised the standard of revolt. Arsaces was their leader. This was about 256 B. C. Once independent, they rapidly grew to be a power with which Rome had to count. The ordinary limits of Parthia extended from the Euphrates to India, from the Chorasmian desert to the shores of the Southern Ocean. Against this rival Rome aimed its heaviest blows; and of all the competitors that tried issues with Rome, the Parthians were the only ones not crushed in the effort. In the year 60 B. C. Caesar, Pompey and Crassus formed the first triumvirate. In November of the year 55 Crassus came to Syria. All the year 54 was lost in useless delays, which only gave the Parthians time to prepare a warm reception. At last in 53 Crassus marched against them with an army of 40,000 men. It was a fearful disaster. At first beaten in open battle, then again beaten in his own camp, he himself was slain. Only one-fourth of his men were saved by the skilful retreat of Cassius Longinus. When the head of Crassus was brought to Orodes, the Parthian king, he ordered molten gold to be poured into the mouth saying: "Now glut your avarice!" Shortly after, their hordes raided Syria and were checked by the Roman general Ventidius. But about the year 35 B. C., Marc Antony resolved to avenge the disgrace heaped on the Roman name by the defeat of Crassus. He sought the Parthians

and met them and lost 30,000 in the encounter. Nevertheless he celebrated a triumph on his return to Rome. The better sense of the Romans comes down to us in the caustic whisper of Velleius Paterculus: "Because he came back alive, he thinks it a triumph." About five years before the birth of Christ, hostilities were renewed. The Romans had appointed Artavasdes as king of Armenia. The Armenians and Parthians joined forces and drove him out. Surely, Rome would not lie quiet under such provocation. And in the year preceding the birth of Our Lord, Augustus made active preparations for a war that would settle matters once for all. He named Caius Caesar, his favorite and prospective heir, commander of the expedition, hoping that he would thus gain the laurels that would grace his ascent to the throne. The celebrated Quirinius was given him as councillor. When the Parthians saw that the Romans were in dead earnest; and themselves quite unprepared for such a conflict, they came to terms and sued for peace in 752 B. C.; the very year in which Our Lord was born. This unexpected turn of affairs was so gratifying to the Romans that they struck a medal in commemoration of it and celebrated it as a triumph. Augustus gave splendid banquets and public games in the summer to swell the common rejoicing. While nations stood at bay in deadly defiance, God was preparing the marvel of his love in Bethlehem and selecting his dear ones from among the sons of men.

The Wise Men. The Greek text calls them Magi. The earliest mention of Magi is found in Herodotus. They seem to be one of the many tribes that united to constitute the Median nation. Gradually they were isolated from the rest so as to form a distinct caste. The care of religion and worship was entrusted to them. In course of time they split up into different classes. Some were interpreters of dreams; some cultivated magic; the highest class was formed of the wise or learned men; and from these was selected the head of the entire Magian order. Those destined for the service of their religion were marked out from earliest boyhood and put through a special course of instruction and training; they entered on actual service with a special ceremony of initiation or consecration. They led a very austere life; were subject to numerous and very minute rules, regulating their own personal purity, ensuring a dignified and modest bearing; some never partook of flesh; thus they won the confidence and esteem of princes and people. Assurbanipal who ruled the Assyrian empire, 667-626 B. C., extended his sway over Elam and Media; and thus the influence of the Magi soon filtered into other countries. Under Nabukodonosor (604-562 B. C.) the title of Rab Mag or head of the Magi is held by his courtiers. Later on when the Persian empire ruled the world, the influence of the Magi was paramount. It was the Magi who interpreted the dream that led Xerxes into Greece. They presided over the sacrifice of white horses which he offered on the banks of the Strymon. Their religion recognized one supreme God called Ormuzd. In his service stood the six spirits called Amshashpands, to whom the control of nature was committed. Subject to these were thousands of lower spirits called Izeds who supervised the harmonious working of the universe. Mithra, or the luminous sky, was the head of the Izeds. In later times Mithra was identified with the sun. Opposed to Ormuzd was Ahriman, the genius of evil, at whose command the "devas" or demons scoured the world to win it for evil. Fire was especially sacred to the Magi; they would not pollute it with their breath and so we see their pictures showing a scarf round their lips when at service: In all probability, the Wise Men of the Gospel belonged to this class, and were representatives of that religion which many regard as the nearest approach to the religion of Israel and perhaps to the primitive revelation made in Paradise. Their political influence may be gauged from a remark of Strabo who informs us that the Magi formed one of the principal councils of the Parthian kings. They must have sought God earnestly, for we see how readily they leave all to answer his invitation. There was ever so much to hold them back from that journey. They were going straight into the very teeth of their born enemies, the Romans. They were passing through regions so insecure that Herod had to summon a party of adventurous soldiers from Antioch to garrison and defend them. They were making for the land of Judea which their countrymen had covered with blood and ruin but a short time ago and whose High Priest, Hyrcanus, they

had dragged away into captivity. It was the season of winter, chill and damp. Why not wait till the New-born Child would be grown up. But they were loyal to God: long had they treasured His promises in their minds and awaited this hour; and now they came.

The chill of the grave. "Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth and a mist the people; but the Lord shall rise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall walk in thy light and kings in the brightness of thy rising." In these words God had been speaking to the Holy City since the days of Isaias (LX, 1-3). But it was as the voice of one crying in the wilderness and dying away amid its dreary sands and lonely gullies and naked rocks.

The people perplexed, vv. 2-3. Holy Writ tells us nothing of the road the Magi took, of the days spent in the trackless desert, of the pelting rain, of meetings with Roman guards or robber thugs; nothing of their first view of the Holy City from some one of the surrounding hills. It may have been early noon when the long line of camels filed through one of the well guarded gates. Perhaps it was here, where crowds of idlers usually gather, that the leaders of the caravan alighted and made there first inquiries about the king of the Jews. Now we learn what *motive* sent them out on this tedious journey. "We have seen his star in the East and are come to adore him." How could they know anything of the King of the Jews and his star? Well,—long ago in the days of Moses, when the Israelites were about to enter the Promised land, they had come into conflict with the Moabites through whose territory they were passing. The Moabites were defeated in a pitched battle. Then Balak their king bethought himself of another means of victory. He sent fleet-footed messengers to Balaam, a prophet who dwelt on the Euphrates. The prophet came, sacrificed on the hilltop, and then prepared to utter his curses on Israel; but he could not curse, and perforce pronounced a blessing. The king hurried him away to the summit of Pisga, and then to that of Peor, hoping to wring from him the curse. But no,—each time a new blessing came from the prophet's lips. The words are familiar: "A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel." Tradition readily gathered up the story of His coming, and held it fast in its iron grip. In the ninth century before Christ the Israelites began to wander into those same regions as captives of the Assyrian invaders. Their tears and sighs renewed the fading memories of old and brought a new fund of tradition, to confirm the hopes of all in a coming Saviour. The Book of Tobias shows how deeply their faith was rooted in Ninive. The Book of Esther shows how populous were the Israelite colonies in the Persian empire. But perhaps no book made a greater impression on the eastern mind than the prophecies of Daniel. His personal position commanded a respectful hearing; and as his long train of predictions went into historic fact, as one by one the seeming dreams hardened into concrete events, then they were startled to feel the hand of God upon them and his spirit breathing from the inspired page. When the Parthians again invaded the Holy Land about 40 years before the birth of Christ, their learned men must have found many a stimulant to recall traditions of the past, and remind them that now their climax must be reached. Even the Roman writers Tacitus and Suetonius assure us that the entire East was tingling with the expectation of a mighty Ruler to rise out of Judea. Certainly, tradition had much to do with their search. But surely grace also met them more than half-way and aided them in putting the right construction on the phenomenon they witnessed in the skies. There are several theories as to the nature of the star. To us it appears to have been a miraculous star for no ordinary star or constellation could have pointed out the very spot where the Child was found. We may imagine with what animation they told their story to the assembled Jews and then ended with the pressing question: "Now where

is he?" The crowds must have wondered. They asked one another what this could mean. Do you not think that the Magi were sadly disappointed? We often think that theirs was an easy sacrifice and that we ourselves would cheerfully have made the same, if called to it by that wonderful star and led on the way almost by the very hand of God. But notice: they tell us distinctly: "We have seen his star in the East." They see it now no longer. Its presence would have been good proof to the Jews at this critical moment. They saw it only in the distant East and then its radiance forsook them and they wandered all alone. The poetry of a heavenly messenger vanished and they plodded on in weary perseverance. The star told them that "*the*" king of the Jews was born, so they took the road to the capital of Judea presuming that here he should be found. They expected the city to be garlanded as for a national feast. They thought that the streets would ring with the acclamations of the jubilant throngs. How their hopes were blighted when they found the city cold and chill!

What *impression* did they produce? Surely their inquiry created quite a stir. For it pricked the most sensitive chord of the national heart: the hopes of the Messias. St. Luke illustrates the keenness of this expectancy when describing the preaching of John the Baptist in III, 15: "And as the people were of opinion and all were thinking in their hearts that perhaps he might be the Christ," he felt himself compelled to deny this expressly. In the Gospel of St. John VI, 14, the enthusiastic crowds extol Our Lord: "This is of a truth the prophet that is to come." The historian Josephus proves the intensity of this longing when he tells how the eager multitudes would follow even impostors to certain death just because they posed as Messias. No wonder that the news of their arrival spread like wild fire among the populace. But alas! Though songs of rejoicing should have rung through their homes, Scripture sadly tells us: "Herod hearing this was troubled and all Jerusalem with him." Herod is put first as the cause and explanation. He heard of it. Last year we reflected on the meaning of those few words: "In the days of King Herod." His spies prowled about every home and listened in every street. His long reign of thirty-seven years was now coming to its close. The hollow bubble of external splendor was about to burst, and shame and crime were hounding him to his grave. His attempt to plunder the grave of King David was the beginning of his disasters. The family circle that should have been his comfort, proved a viper's nest to him. His own son had plotted to poison him and Herod had just confined him in prison awaiting the sanction of Rome for his execution. Just then a dreadful malady befell him. He was hated by the greater part of the nation, and he knew it well. Now comes this rumor of the strangers! The people were troubled too. Some few may have been pondering on the words of the prophets and awaiting the promised Saviour in patient hope. And these,—had they not every reason to fear the jealousy of the brute who ruthlessly exterminated the family of the Asmoneans just because they challenged his claim to the crown? Some too were now reconciled to the dynasty of Herod on account of his successes in temporal matters. Some had become the recipients of his favors and feared that their fortunes were imperilled with his. But the vast majority dreaded the wild rage of the tyrant who would fill the city with a reign of terror and choke any supposed revolt in a flood of innocent blood.

Deceptive leaders, 4-6. It was not long before Herod summoned the strangers to his palace, offering them his royal hospitality. The palace was built on the western hill close to the city walls. Its magnificence was such that even the fabulous beauty of the temple could not compare with this. While he entertained his guests, he orders a meeting of the Sanedrim, the Grand Council of the nation in all matters of church and state. It held its regular sessions on Mondays and Thursdays. This may have been Monday, agreeing with our January 5, of the year of Rome, 753. The place of meeting was the Hall Haggazith in one of the courts of the temple square. Here the solemn assembly was gathered when the king's messenger enters with the *question* of Herod: "Where Christ should be born?" Notice, his question aims only at the place. He does not add the second query about the time; as if he himself held that superfluous. God will not take us unawares. He summons the leaders of the people. He puts the question of life and death, and puts it in broad daylight. None can say that time for reflection was not given, that attention was

not called, that counsel was refused, that they were taken by surprise. No, the entire populace is now in a turmoil, the leaders are now being put to the question. The *answer*? It came simply and readily. There is no hint of doubt or debate. God had done his share to instruct them. "In Bethlehem of Juda." The prophecy of Micheas (V, 2) is then given in full. If you compare the citation given here with the words of the prophet you will detect slight alterations in the words. But then see: The words given here are the words of the Sanedrim; they describe Bethlehem as it stood in the eyes of God and in the glory of its exaltation as city of the Messias, while the prophet calls it a small city as it truly was in human eyes. Then too their words are rather the correct explanation of the prophecy. And what resolutions passed? Only the coldness of the grave. They seemed to take no interest in the matter at all. Perhaps it was because the High Priests and some of the more influential members shared the unbelief of the Saducees and only ridiculed the notion of a Saviour. Perhaps they feared to be the dupes of another upstart. Probably they too feared the political consequences of arousing the rage of Herod who had put nearly all the members of the Sanedrim to death in the days of his accession. They quote verse 2 of Micheas; let us read the first verse of the chapter: "Now shalt thou be laid waste, O daughter of the robber; they have laid siege against us, with a rod shall they strike the cheek of the judges of Israel." For more reasons than one could Our Lord rebuke them in Mt. XXI, 13: "My house shall be called the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves." The leaders held the light; but not to shine upon their way. They hid it under the bushel basket.

The King's designs, 7-8. He called them to a private *interview*. He had hatched a plot of his own and would not let others into his secret. None should interfere with his designs. Externally he may have feigned the profoundest indifference to the wild reports. But he would not take his chances. "He learned diligently of them, the time of the star." He did not ply them with questions; this might have roused suspicion. He made them repeat the narrative, which they did in all sincerity. He wanted to know the time of the star; this would help him to find the child. They told him how they had watched the skies. Astronomers calculate that Jupiter and Saturn had been in conjunction in 747, or about 5 years before the birth of Christ. Then according to Chinese astronomical tablets a comet appeared in 750 which was visible in Bethlehem. Now they described the miraculous star appearing in the preceding year. We cannot sound the depths of his heart and guess what thoughts this narrative brought him. He bade them *farewell*. Only one parting request: "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him." But why not send an armed troop with them? Why not send some spy to trace them? Perhaps sickness and vexations had crowded his mind. Perhaps too he thought them securely deceived. He may have seen no immediate reason for alarm in a child just born. Perhaps God managed matters. The Book of Job tells us in VIII, 13: "The hope of the hypocrite shall perish." With fair wishes he sent them on their way.

Lead kindly Light, 9-12. "Behold the Lord God shall come with strength, and his arm shall rule; behold his reward is with him and his work is before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather together the lambs with his arm, and shall take them up in his bosom." His arm shall foil the plots of the king; His zeal will baffle the treacherous inaction of the Council; His grace will reach the poor; His love will lead the Strangers to His bosom.

The Magi passed from the palace, out through the Jaffa gate, then turned south into the *road* that led to Bethlehem. It may have been the early evening. But Bethlehem was only about six miles away. Their eagerness gave wings to their feet. But see! "The star went before them." Some suppose that it simply preceded them to the place, and was invisible all the time. Certainly it was not needed to find the city for that was pointed out by God in the prophet's words.

Still the text seems too distinct. The star "went before" and then again it "stood". The contrast seems to favor the view that it reappeared some time before reaching their destination. Then they breathed freely again and rejoiced. The incidents of the day must have tried their faith and devotion sorely. But now the star was with them and all was well. Perhaps it led them round the eastern wall of the city, till it reached the southeastern end. They may have wondered all the while, where it would rest. Now it stands; where? Many suppose that St. Joseph had removed the child to a *house* in the city. St. Epiphanius is the first to teach this; and bases his view on the Greek word used in v. 11, meaning a "house". But his argument is not so strong, as we may see by comparing Psalm CIII, where the word "house" indicates the nest of a bird. There are many other examples of the same use. Hence we prefer the opinion of Saints Justin, Chrysostom, and Jerome, who maintain that the Magi found Our Lord in the cave where he was born. Here before the cavern the caravan halted. The servants bustled about in surprise and wonderment. Some may have murmured that things were surely gone wrong. But the calm shining of the star beckoned the Magi on. They entered the cave despite its darkness, its dampness, despite the lowing of the cattle; and there sought their God. They laid their gifts on the cold ground before Him. How those moments passed is the secret of the angels that hovered over the scene. How long they staid with the Mother and the Child, who can tell? The text only adds the remark: "And having received an answer in their sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their country." Perhaps they returned that same night. But how is it that *Herod* did not see through their design and send his executioners in quest of them and the child, the very next day; for he knew that they could have returned in a few hours. He may have made allowance for a longer search. Or more probably the special circumstances of the hour account for all. We said that Herod was taken ill. The rumor spread among the people that he had died. The city was trembling with excitement. Two celebrated teachers with about forty of their scholars went to the temple at noon hour, when it was crowded with worshippers, and fell to work chopping down the golden eagle which Herod had suspended over the temple gate. The hated image came down with a crash, and was being hacked to pieces; curious crowds gathered round. Soon the soldiers of Herod appear on the scene. Some of the onlookers are seized. The two teachers with their scholars disdain flight and are taken to Herod. He reproaches them with their crime and then ordered all sent down to Jeriko where he would continue the trial. Thither the High Priest and the leaders of the people were summoned. He feared that the people had entered into a general conspiracy against him. The High Priest was deposed from office. The teachers and their pupils were burned at the stake; the rest were handed over to the soldiery to be butchered. That night there was an eclipse. Astronomers have calculated the eclipses of the years of Rome 750, 751, 752, 753. Now in 753 there was an eclipse in the night between the ninth and tenth of January. It was the Sabbath. So we can imagine with what distractions this week was filled. How the errand of the Magi dwindles into insignificance amid a swirl of such events as this!

JOHN ZELLER, C. Ss. R.

Better widows and orphans made by machine guns than by divorce decrees. It will not bring the blush of shame to their cheeks to tell why they are so.

Anarchistic bombs exploded in Catholic churches! Even there is a proof of the divinity of our faith. Enmity to God is the open profession of anarchy, and it knows that the Catholic church is the house of God.

IN DURANCE VILE.

Three days passed before we again got a peep at the Missionary. On inquiry the Apothecarian told us that the old gentleman was "under the weather".

"Anything serious?" we anxiously inquired.

"No, only a visit from his old friend lumbago. He was almost helpless day before yesterday, but this morning he was smiling again, and, I think, tomorrow he'll be in 'statu quo'."

Father Johnson and I had been making many surmises about Willie. Had he really been kidnapped or, was it only a false alarm? We were both burning with curiosity to find out. But the next morning our old friend was nowhere to be seen. In the afternoon when the sun had gone westering, Father Johnson and I strolled down toward the front gate near the Country Club, and crossing the lawn towards the lake front, slowly worked our way along towards the boathouse. As we descended the stairs, to our great joy we saw the Missionary sitting in the shade deeply immersed in his breviary.

"Welcome back from the gates of death"! exclaimed Father Johnson effusively.

"It wasn't quite as bad as that," responded he, "but, let me tell you, young man, lumbago is no joke."

"I don't believe it is," said Father Johnson, doubling his legs under him. He had never had an ache in his life.

"Remember," said the Missionary, "no holiness without pain."

"Well, then," replied Father Johnson, "there's no hope for me."

"I think not."

"But, Father, we're just dying of curiosity to know what happened to Willie. Was he kidnapped?"

The Missionary marked, with a picture, in his breviary, the place where he had left off, and smiling, began.

I.

The fact is, that Willie had really been kidnapped. After the boys had wearied themselves out marching around the block and Willie had carried the new drum up to his room and laid it tenderly away, as I have already told you, he heard Carlo barking furiously out on the back lawn. Now, Willie knew every note in Carlo's bark, and he knew at once that the dog was after a stranger. So he hurried down stairs

as fast as he could and out into the yard, where he found Carlo quite excited, his hair bristling, and barking savagely towards the street. 'Twas now quite dark, before moonrise, and gazing steadily down the driveway, Willie could distinguish nothing. Taking Carlo by the collar he led him into the stable lot, closing and fastening the gate. This was a great blunder, as we shall see. Then, with a boy's curiosity, he walked briskly down the driveway to the street. Well had it been for him had Carlo been at his side at this juncture. But, unfortunately, with his own hands he had locked up that faithful friend. There was a street-lamp dimly burning across the street, which served only to accentuate the gathering darkness. With the aid of this light, he discerned faintly outlined, close in to the curb, about twenty feet away, a large touring car. Two men had just alighted and were coming toward him. But not the faintest suspicion ever entered the mind of the lad who stood there curiously watching them advance. As they drew near they separated, one passing on either side as if to get around him, when suddenly they seized him and before he could cry out a large, rough hand closed his mouth, and he heard a coarse voice say:

"If he croaks, Bill, cut his throat."

"That I will," said the other.

In a twinkling they had him in the auto between them and Bill had slipped a black kerchief over his eyes, tying the knot very tight at the back of his head. In another instant there was a gag slipped into his mouth and his two hands tightly bound together with leathern thongs in front of him. All this in a moment, but not before the quick eye of the boy had taken in several details. Not the slightest glimpse of their faces had he caught, but, by the struggling rays of light from the street-lamp which shone directly upon them, he noted that the left hand of the one called Bill was covered by abundant black hair, that the middle joint of the first finger was flat and wide as if it had been crushed, that the nail of that same finger was split, and that on the little finger was a gold ring set with a large Brazilian topaz. He noted, also, that the left foot was wide and deformed by a large bunion and that the shoe was vici-kid, round and broad at the toe and not boxed.

"Well, well!" exclaimed Father Johnson, "those hunters notice everything, don't they?"

"They certainly do," said the Missionary, "and 'tis well, for we, who see only the most obvious things, overlook the greatest number of the exquisite beauties with which God has punctuated our daily life. A

sentence taken at random from a favorite author of mine will illustrate what I say. Writing of a 'footpath' through the meadows near London he says: 'Now the path approaches a stile set deep in thorns and brambles, and hardly to be gained for curved hooks and prickles. But on the briars June roses bloom, arches of flowers over nettles, burdock and rushes in the ditch beneath. Sweet roses—buds yet unrolled, white and conical; roses half open and pink tinted; roses widespread, the petals curling backward on the hedge, abandoning their beauty to the sun. In the pasture over the stile a roan cow feeds unmoved, calmly content, gathering the grass with rough tongue. It is not only what you see along the path, but what you remember to have seen, that gives it its beauty.' Did you ever notice all these wonders while walking along an ordinary footpath?"

"No, I never did," replied Father Johnson, "at least not with such minute detail."

"And you such a poet and lover of nature," pursued the Missionary, "what must it be with us dull clods? Anyway, Willie was crowded unceremoniously down on the rear seat between the two burly fellows and the car bounded forward. But even if the boy's eyes were blindfolded, and his mouth gagged, and his hands tied with thongs that cut into the skin, all his senses were fully alert. Little did these rough men suspect the kind of youngster they were dealing with. There was scarcely a square foot of ground within ten miles of Pulaski, in any direction, that Willie hadn't tramped or rode over. He knew every road, every cow-path, every tree, every hill, every bridge, every branch and valley. Presently the car gave a quick turn. Willie knew from the swaying of his body the direction of the turn. "Oho!" he said to himself, "they're turning north into Wilson's Lane." The auto darted forward and quickened speed. After about five minutes' run another quick turn. Willie laughed in his heart. "East on the Beryl road," he said to himself, "now, five miles will bring us to the iron bridge across Clarke's Creek. Otherwise, they must turn south into the Dobson road." Ten minutes and there was a quick turn. Willie chuckled. "I thought so. South again. We'll soon reach Brigg's bridge and the long hill." Just then, Bill reached over and began to loosen the gag.

"I'll take this bit out o' yore mouth," he said, "but if you neigh I'll split your jugular."

"I don't intend to neigh," said Willie, "but I'd be glad if you'd loosen that cord around my wrists. It cuts me."

"Aw," said Bill, "'taint no use torturin' you." And he loosened the thongs around Willie's wrists. There was blood on the boy's hands, but he said not a word. At that instant the car rumbled into the bridge. "Ha! I thought so. Now, for the long hill," said Willie. In another minute the chauffeur changed gears. Willie could feel the vibration of the auto under the increased power, as it climbed the long hill. "Now," thought Willie, "we'll soon come to Willow road. That goes out to Uncle Stanhope's and passes our house going to the river." Presently the auto, which was now going at a forty mile clip, slowed down and made the turn towards the river. This move completely mystified the boy. Two miles would bring them back to Wilson's lane and only a few blocks from his own home. They had now gotten over about five miles making a large square. The suspicion began to dawn on Willie's mind that someone was just playing a practical joke on him and would soon drop him at his front gate and scud away. So, he ventured to ask by way of sounding:

"How far are we from home?"

"We're fifteen miles from Pulaski right now," replied Bill.

"You liar, you!" said Willie under his breath.

Just then they swung into Wilson's lane again, but this time south. A mile south, then a quick turn toward the river. Willie laughed quietly. The moment the auto struck Morgan St., which is bricked, Willie knew it. After that the machine slowed down considerably and began zigzagging south and west toward the river, now in one street, now in another, until it finally emerged on Front St. and turned north. "Aha!" said Willie. "I see; they're going to take me on the R. R. bridge across the Chatahoochee into Alabama." His heart sank, and for the first time he began to feel very lonely. Presently, the auto gave a bound. "Well, well," said Willie to himself, "that's funny. They've crossed the road leading to the bridge and they're going straight ahead north. At this rate they'll soon be at the covered bridge." Sure enough, in about two minutes the car slowed down, and Willie could hear the rattling of the bridge floor as the auto rumbled over it. Then, out again into the night. Just opposite this point about two miles west the Chatahoochee makes a turn to the northeast as you go north, and the road, an extension of Front St., is here called River Road and runs directly north; thus coming much nearer to the river. After a short run, Willie could feel the cool breath of the river on his face and the scent of pine and cypress trees. He knew the spot well and often he

and Billy Buttons had stopped here and sniffed the life giving ozone of the pines, and feasted their eyes on the dark green beauty of Ogden forest, which stretches up and down the river for many miles. Another moment and the auto stopped short with a jerk as the chauffeur applied the brake.

"Come, now, young man," said Bill, "get your legs under you"; and each holding an arm they got him outside to the ground. Then, forcing their way through the dense undergrowth, they dragged him into the swamp about twenty yards when they halted, and Bill gave three short whistles. An answer of three short whistles came almost instantaneously. Then, Willie could hear the crackling of the undergrowth as someone approached.

"Aha! Jerry. I see you're at your post," said Bill.

"You bet," piped a shrill falsetto voice.

"Here's the kid we promised you. Take good care of him, if he's good; and if he gives you trouble, knock his brains out."

"You bet I will," responded Jerry.

"As soon as the old man coughs up, you'll hear from us. Until then, adieu!"

"Oho!" thought Willie, "that's the game. Thank God they're not going to murder me." With that the two ruffians turned him over to the tender mercies of Jerry Oldfinch, and forcing their way back to the road, disappeared.

"Come, my 'Little Lord Fauntleroy,'" said Jerry, "let me lead you to my hospitable mansion," and he started off through the woods dragging after him the blindfolded boy. This was anything but pleasant but the boy held his peace. After about an eighth of a mile, the ground became softer and softer. Presently Jerry said:

"Now, my Lord, I must carry you across the lake, lest you wet your dainty feet, but your guv'nor will pay later," and he cackled out a harsh laugh.

With that he swung the boy up on his right arm as if a feather, and started anew. Willie realized that the man was a giant in size and strength.

"Can't you manage to keep my face away from those limbs?" said Willie. "They hurt me."

"Ha! ha!" said the giant, "you have no great beauty to spoil."

"I'd like to get a peep at your beauty," said Willie.

"Just wait, my covey, and you'll see it soon enough."

Then, Willie could hear the splash of the man's foot as he stepped into the water and began wading.

"They're sharp enough," thought Willie, "but not as sharp as they think. They think to elude all pursuit of blood-hounds by carrying me across this lagoon. I know the place well, have hunted around it more than once."

Jerry waded bravely along, and at last he stepped onto the other shore. He had gone through about a quarter of a mile of shallow water. Then, ducking his head, he worked his way through dense undergrowth, still carrying the boy, so that no footsteps would be in evidence, then through a thick cane brake, and at last with a grunt he dropped him to the ground.

"There, get your pins under you," he said, and dragging him along as before, for some distance, he suddenly stopped and Willie heard him fumbling at a lock. After some working he heard the key turn and the creaking of a door, as it swung on its rusty hinges, and again he felt the strong arm around his waist as Jerry carried him down a stairway. Then, he was dropped to the floor.

"Now, we're home," said Jerry with a chuckle, and leading the boy across the room, he threw a chain around his waist and locked it.

"Now," he said, laughing derisively, "I'll give my Lord a chance to behold my beauty."

With that he struck a match and lit a tallow candle. Whereupon he unbound Willie's hands, and untied the kerchief which blindfolded him. At first, the light, dim as it was, dazzled the eyes which had been pressed so close and tight by the black bandage. But, as they returned to their normal condition, the boy took in his surroundings. He was secured to a large upright beam against the dirt wall by a heavy chain. Between him and the wall was a low, narrow cot, not any too clean looking. Evidently the room was mostly under ground, for it was lighted in the daytime by two small square windows, one on each side of the door through which they had entered. Leading up to this door was a half ladder, half stairway, about eight feet long. The room was about fifteen feet square and of about the same height, and the walls and ceiling were timbered by four-inch beams to prevent caving. For furniture there were a rusty stove with a pipe which went out through one of the window panes, some dirty-looking cooking utensils, a plain deal table of pine, an axe, a hatchet, some wood, a saddle with blanket and bridle, and some pegs driven in the beams from which hung some

nondescript garments. There were also a few pine chairs, on one of which stood a tin bucket of water, and on another lay a double-barreled shot-gun. Against the wall opposite to Willie's stood another and larger cot covered with a rough grey blanket. Willie thought of his own little dainty room at home, his gun and his drum and the tears slowly welled into his eyes. And he thought, "whatever put it into my head to lock Carlo up? He would have torn these fellows to pieces." But before him and leering at him with his right elbow resting on the pine table and holding in his left hand a yellow corn-cob pipe just freshly filled with Perique tobacco, sat the most villainous looking, bizarre, unkempt, angular, misshapen creature that nature had ever jointed together. His head was abnormally large and thickly matted with a shock of sandy-colored hair. The ears were so large they almost flapped. The steely-blue eyes were small and close together, and surmounted by bushy red eyebrows. His nose was rather flat and broad with a round purplish promontory at the point and large open nostrils. His cheek bones stood high and were like two red over-ripe tomatoes. The mouth was enormous and when closed looked like a slit in his face, so thin and colorless were the lips. To put the finishing touch to this grotesque countenance, a straggling red mustache widened out into a scraggy beard that thinly spread itself over a sharp-pointed chin and formed a kind of tuft around his throat, then dwindled away into a thin coating of sandy hairs around his long scrawny neck. Sloping shoulders led down to a pair of gorilla-like arms ending in a huge pair of hairy hands. His chest looked caved-in. His trunk considering his height was short. He wore a blue jacket ending in points at his waist. His legs, long and thin, looked like a pair of knitting needles stuck into a pumpkin. They were encased in a pair of blue jeans, tight around the knees and wide at the bottom, about six inches above his ankles. His enormous feet were enclosed in a pair of number fourteen russet brogans. As he sat there leering at the boy, his mouth expanded into a grin, displaying a mouthful of huge yellow tusk-like teeth which had been gradually meerchaumed by tobacco and which from his cradle had never had even a bowing acquaintance with a tooth-brush. Willie's eyes were fixed upon the face of this monstrosity as the bird is fascinated by the snake about to strike it.

"Well, my Lord," said Jerry, taking the stub of the burnt match and lighting it at the flame of the candle, "what do you think o' me? Think I'd take the first prize at a beauty show?"

He laughed heartily as the boy continued to gaze at him in wonder. Then, applying the lighted match to his pipe, he gave several vigorous sucks at it, emitting clouds of bluish, pungent smoke which soon diffused itself throughout the room, and as there was no ventilation to speak of, remained. Then Willie found his voice.

"Would you mind opening that door?" he said. "I don't like tobacco smoke. It sickens me."

"Ha! ha!! ha!!!" laughed Jerry, "you must be a Methodist preacher if you don't like tobacco. I'll get you over that. I'll make you smoke this pipe," and rising, he started across to Willie, taking the pipe out of his dirty mouth. Willie, already half-sickened by the fumes of the strong Perique tobacco, jumped upon his cot and planting his back firmly against the beam to which he was stapled, drawing up his right foot while his eyes flashed indignantly, he cried out:

"You try it, you beast, and I'll kick your face off. Take your old pipe and yourself to a pig-pen where you both belong."

"What!" said Jerry, "I'll give you ventilation," and he drew from his hip-pocket a six-shooter Colt's revolver, while his steely eyes gleamed cruelly. But Willie's Irish was thoroughly aroused.

"Shoot away!" he exclaimed, "I can't die but once."

Jerry drew back in admiration, and slipping the pistol back into his pocket.

"By gums!" he said, "you're game. Come, let's be friends," and he stuck out his big hairy paw. Willie hesitated. "O, it's all right," said Jerry, "I mean it. I ain't a-goin' to bother you."

So Willie put out his little hand and Jerry gave it a hearty shake. Then, climbing up the stair, he flung open the door.

"I ain't no bear," he said, "even if I didn't have no ma. There's wusser than me, let me tell you. Them fellers that stole you's a d— sight wusser than me."

W. T. BOND, C. Ss. R.

NOTE—In the February Liguorian: "The Pursuit."

The Water Wagon will get an awful jolt when it strikes the rut in the road St. Patrick's day or the Fourth of July. All who are not held on tightly by the grace of God will be pitched off headlong.

A certain place where asphalt is tabu because it would never cool, is said to be paved with good resolutions. Take care that you do not contract to do any paving there.

DESOLATION.

Oh God, the Cross thou hast sent me
Seems more than I'm able to bear
And my mis'ry and sorrow prevent me
From finding thy presence in prayer.
Oh, I listen to hear if thou'rt calling,
For the road is lonely and drear
And my tears are bitterly falling,
Let me know that thy presence is near.

Oh the sadness and sorrow that frets me
Are akin to the pains of the damned;
For bleak desolation besets me
As tear-blinded I look for thy hand.
Oh let me not stray or alone be,
In this desert of horrible drear
But come thou and stand alongside me
Let me know that thy presence is near.

Oh grant me the grace to resigned be
As I plod 'neath the weight of this cross
And the death thou hast suffered, remind me,
That the cravings of flesh are no loss.
And oh for a glimpse of thy glorious face,
Of thy heart so sacred and dear,
Oh comfort my soul with thy wondrous grace
Let me know that thy presence is near.

—James C. Carroll.

The Catholic does not wait for New Year's to take his good resolutions; he has to take them—and mean them—every time he goes to confession.

What would you do if Almighty God revealed to you that this would be the last year of your life? Do now what you would do then; it is the only safe, prudent, and sensible line of conduct.

	Catholic Anecdotes	
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WAR STORIES.

A war correspondent for the London *Times* tells how one day he saw a number of wounded soldiers on their knees in the chapel of a military hospital reciting the litany. It was one of those days when the sound of the guns, from some trick of the wind, as well as from their actual nearness, was more than usually loud and close, and each time the three words of the prayer rang out through the open door, they were followed without a moment's pause by the booming roar of the heavy shells. "And of the two," he continues, "of the cannon that had shattered their limbs or the kneeling women that soothed and tended them, there was not, I think, much doubt in the minds of the wounded men as to which was the finer force—and the stronger."

Father Demolis, a Priest of the diocese of Annecy, was marching under fire when a soldier was shot down at his side. The Priest turned to give the dying man absolution and was himself killed while doing so.

During the bombardment of Antwerp Cardinal Mercier remained in the city to be near his suffering people. He spent his nights in a cellar, and there he celebrated Holy Mass every morning.

A Protestant Corporal in the British army owes his life to a crucifix, which, yielding to a strange impulse, he had picked up in a farm house and put in his knapsack. Several of his companions were killed by bullets that were nearly spent; he himself was wounded in the knee. When he was picked up by the ambulance and examined, it was found that a bullet had pierced his knapsack where it had struck the crucifix and glanced aside without entering his body.

There is a lesson even for civilians in the letter of a Munster Fusilier to his father, wherein he says: "I am not forgetting to say a part of my rosary every night no matter what I am doing."

A French regiment of Hussars went to Lourdes, made their Confession, received Holy Communion, and heard a Solemn Mass as their final preparations for the march to the front.

	Pointed Paragraphs	
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A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

We wish you a happy New Year! May God bless you and all that are dear to you. May He bless your undertakings and make them prosper. May He bless your good resolutions and help you to keep them. May He bless your thoughts, your words, and your deeds, your coming in and your going out, your labors undertaken for love of Him, and your deeds of kindness for your fellow men. May He bless your very cross, so that you may bear it bravely, and bearing it bravely, become more like Him. May 1915 stand on the credit side for the great account, so that for all eternity you may reckon it a happy new year.

SOWED WITH SALT.

In ancient times, as Scripture tells us, when a nation defeated a feared and hated rival, they would sometimes try to blot out the conquered people from the earth. After burning every habitation for man or beast, butchering the male population, carrying away the women and children into captivity, they would even go so far as to *sow the entire country with salt* so that no living plant would ever be seen there again, and it would be impossible for the conquered nation to revive.

Whenever the devil leads us into mortal sin he destroys that fair city, our soul, and makes us his prisoners and slaves; but it is only when he *sows us with salt*—the salt of mortal pride—that he kills every germ of supernatural life within us. There is hope for the conversion of every sinner except for the one that stubbornly persists in the deadly sin of pride.

YOUNG MEN'S SUNDAY AFTERNOONS

Where do city young men spend their Sunday afternoons? In theatres? Saloons? Billiard rooms? Yes, no doubt many of them do; but we know twenty young men in the city of Chicago who do not. These twenty or more young men spend their Sunday afternoons in the public institutions built by the state or the city for the care of the poor. And what do they do there? They cheer those suffering and

abandoned creatures by song and story and cheerful words, and above all they give the Catholic inmates simple and solid instructions in their holy faith. Sunday after Sunday—how dull it must be! Do you pity them? Spare your pity kind reader. "Blue Monday," so gruesome after Sunday's "good time", is unknown to them, for they bravely begin the new week's work with their hearts full of gladness at the thought that they have brought some sunshine into sad, lonely hearts, and with the choicest blessings of Him who loved the poor.

These young men have been duly organized into a society called St. Aloysius Charity Sodality. The sodality's motto is, "The Visitation of the Poor and the Sick and the Catechetical Instruction of Boys who attend the Public Schools." Young men in Chicago who wish to join the sodality or young men outside of Chicago who wish to do a like work of charity in their own city or town and are seeking advice may address any of the following: A. Baltazore, president, 1664 Larrabee St., Joseph Bregenzer, vice-president, 1815 Hammond Ave., Carlton Prindeville, secretary, 2024 Lane Court, Chicago, Ill.

GOOD RESOLUTIONS SINFUL.

Half the good resolutions taken on New Year's Day in this semi-pagan land are sinful. Every one that knows God—the True God, not a caricature of Him—knows that we cannot do the smallest good deed without His divine help. To reject His help and rely upon our own weak will is an act of idolatry; it is to bestow the honor that is due to God upon the idol of our own proud self. How many a man acts thus on New Year's Day. *'I will give up this bad habit. I will acquire this virtue. I have made up my mind. I have said, 'never again', and that settles it!'* There is not a word about asking God for help; the idol of self is supreme. What wonder then that a little pebble of temptation strikes the clay feet of their idol and shatters it before the ink is dry wherewith they wrote their good resolution! And still they do not learn!

TRY, TRY AGAIN!

"It is better to take no resolutions at all than to take them only to break them again; therefore, I take none." That is like saying: "It is better not to eat at all than to choke yourself eating; therefore, no more

eating for me." You have your faults (unless you are a Saint—Saints will please skip this paragraph), and it is your duty to try to overcome them. But you will never so much as try to overcome them unless you make up your mind to do so. But making up your mind to do so, with the help of God, is nothing else than taking a good resolution. A true resolution includes two things: First, a firm confidence that, in answer to your fervent prayers, God will help you; Second, an honest purpose to use the means He places at your disposal.

Take a resolution of this kind, and I do not say that you will never break it, for the human will is weak and changeable, but I do say that you will always be a better man for having taken it. Your humility, your distrust of self and confidence in God will receive their reward. He will give you the grace to renew the resolution again and again with ever increasing firmness, to pray with more fervor, to approach the sacraments more frequently, until at last you emerge victorious from the struggle. The man, on the other hand, who takes no resolution, for fear of breaking them, will sink deeper and deeper into his faults, until he becomes blind to his own wretched state and his cure therefore hopeless.

AND THE ANGEL WONDERED.

It was New Year's Day. "I resolve," said the Parish Priest, and the recording Angel hearkened, pen in hand. "I resolve to reduce the debt on church, and school, and house during the coming year." The Angel smiled as he wrote that resolution for the millionth time.

"I resolve," said the parishioner—the Angel marvelled; could he believe his ears? Verily, there was no mistaking the distinct and even tones: "I resolve to contribute generously to the support of church and Pastor during the coming year." And the Angel wondered; during his six thousand years' experience he had never before been called upon to record such a New Year's resolution.

THE LIGUORIAN'S NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION.

Sir (or Madam) :—The *Liguorian* is going to take you into its confidence and tell you its New Year's resolution. The *Liguorian* came into existence for one sole end—to aid its readers to save their soul.

It's New Year's resolution is to make each new number better than the last in striving for this end. The road to heaven is called the narrow way, but it is not necessarily a sad, a gloomy, or a dismal way. The *Liguorian* resolves to labor to make that way bright and cheerful—aye, happy—for its readers, to help them to know that way so well that they will never mistake a deceitful by-path for it, to warn them of the dangers that lurk along it, and to point out where they will find safe shelter and strengthening food when weak and footsore from the journey.

Such is the *Liguorian's* New Year's resolution—and yours? Would it not be pleasing to Our Lord if yours was the resolution to bring the knowledge of the *Liguorian* to those who need a cheering and a guiding word as they struggle along the narrow way?

"IT'S ALL RIGHT, IF IT'S DONE RIGHT."

The "Tango", with its motley progeny of "Hops" and "Trots" and "Glides" and "Hugs", has proved a boon to mankind. It has made the land bud forth with Solomons—fond mamma Solomons, proud papa Solomons, spotless daughter Solomons, with an occasional editor Solomon or even a minister Solomon thrown in. The process is simple: You simply watch for a propitious moment when you have the attention of your audience and say "The—ahem—modern dance is all right, if it's done right". Just try that, and see how all the queens of Sheba will marvel at your wisdom.

Not to let slip this golden opportunity of making ourselves a name, we will make the words of wisdom our own: "The modern dance is all right, if it's done right". Eliminate from it the lecherous wriggles and hugs that constitute its chief attraction, and it's all right. We will even go further and out-Solomon the Solomons: "Everything is all right, if it's done right." Eliminate falsehood from lying, and it's all right; eliminate injustice from theft, and it's all right; eliminate bodily injury from murder, and it's all right; eliminate the sinful element from any human action, and that action is all right.

TWENTY-SIX REASONS FOR BREAKING YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION.

The editor of the *Western World* (Des Moines) found the following in an old scrap book.

Mr. A drinks because he is going on a journey.

Mr. B drinks because his doctor ordered him not to, and he hates quackery.

Mr. C takes a drop because he's wet.

Mr. D because he's dry.

Mr. E because he feels something rising in his stomach.

Mr. F because he feels a kind of sinking in his stomach.

Mr. G because he's going to see a friend off to England.

Mr. H because he's got a friend come home from California.

Mr. I because he's so hot.

Mr. J because he's so cold.

Mr. K because he's got a pain in his head.

Mr. L because he's got a pain in his side.

Mr. M because he's got a pain in his back.

Mr. N because he's got a pain in his chest.

Mr. O because he's got a pain all over him.

Mr. P because he feels light and happy.

Mr. Q because he feels heavy and miserable.

Mr. R because he's married.

Mr. S because he isn't.

Mr. T because he's going to be.

Mr. U because his friend has been.

Mr. V because he likes to see his friends around him.

Mr. W because he's got no friends and enjoys a glass by himself.

Mr. X because his uncle left him a legacy.

Mr. Y because his aunt cut him off without a shilling.

Mr. Z (we should be happy to inform our readers what Mr. Z's reasons were for drinking, but on putting the question to him, we found him too tipsy to answer).

More power to the *Western World's* scrap book!

St. Francis de Sales says that we should keep our lips buttoned up. While unbuttoning them to speak we would then have a moment to consider the propriety of what we were about to say.

Recipe for a sweet temper: Every night before going to bed, ask yourself: How many human hearts that were sad enough already have been made sadder by my speech and conduct this day?

	Catholic Events	
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Bishop Fallon of London, Ont., says that he has confirmed nearly 700 adult converts.—*Exchange*.

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Rev. Daniel Leo McShane is the first Priest ordained from the American Seminary for Foreign Missions at Maryknoll. God grant that many thousands may follow him, for the foreign missions will suffer untold losses on account of the war.

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The *Irish Catholic* points to the fact that the British government is going to great pains to provide goat meat for the Hindu and Mohammedan soldiers in France because their religion forbids either beef or pork, while this same government long turned a deaf ear to all petitions to provide Chaplains for the Catholic soldiers.

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St. Ann's Hall (Redemptorist), Montreal, was the scene of a remarkable Total Abstinence mass meeting, Nov. 15. Numbers were turned away for want of space in the large hall. Archbishop Bruchesi presided, and many of the leading men in the public life of the Dominion were present.

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Archduchess Maria Theresa of Austria, now known as humble Sister Michaelis, is nursing wounded soldiers in Vienna.

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In 1909, Professor George Wright, a convert, bequeathed his 6,000 volumes as the nucleus of a Catholic free library for the city of St. Louis. Today the library numbers more than 20,000 volumes.

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A recent issue of *L'Illustration* has a picture of the Franciscan Nuns of Chatelets cutting and stacking wheat instead of the peasants who are gone to war.

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During the recent epidemic in Olean, N. Y., and while the city water there was under suspicion, the citizens were invited to use the water supplied by the artesian well at the Knights of Columbus club house. Strange that some people would be imprudent enough to drink water from such a source—those dreadful Knights might be trying to poison all the Non-Catholics!

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The faculty and a number of the students of Louvain are expected to come to the University of Notre Dame, where they have been offered hospitality without any charge.

Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, whose assassination precipitated the present war, had endowed a convent of perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, with the request that the Nuns should pray daily for all his enemies. Striking testimony to the nobility of his loyal Catholic heart!

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In the recent awarding of prizes by the Propaganda at Rome the Students of the American college won 7 Doctorates in Theology, 11 Doctorates in Philosophy, 8 first and 19 second medals, besides numerous other successes.

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The bitter anti-Catholic campaign to the contrary notwithstanding, there are at present more Catholics in the U. S. Senate than ever before. They are Ashurst, O'Gorman, Walsh, Ransdell, Broussard, and Phelan.

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Dec. 26, 40 Mexican Priests and Nuns arrived in Galveston on the U. S. transport, Antilla.

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When Catholics stand up for their rights in a body, they obtain, if not all, at least some of them. There was a shameful lack of Catholic Chaplains in the British army; the Catholic people, Prelates, and newspapers protested until the government agreed to appoint a number of Chaplains at least somewhat in proportion to the number of Catholic soldiers.

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There are thousands of Catholics among the troops brought from India to take part in the European struggle.

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Charles Peguy, the famous poet, publicist, and Democratic politician, was killed in the battle of the Marne. He was once a Socialist, but later on became a devout Catholic.

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Exiled Mexican Priests are already beginning parishes in this country for the poor Mexican laborers who are found in large numbers in many of our middle and western states.

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Cardinal Cavallari, Patriarch of Venice, died Nov. 24. Cardinal Cavallari had taken a firm stand against modern immodest modes of dressing and dancing. He is reported saying of the Tango that "only those persons who have lost all moral sense can endure it".

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Sunday, Nov. 22, St. Peter's, Rome, witnessed a sight that has been extremely rare since the Italian usurpation—the Pope speaking in public. He spoke on Faith; 50,000 persons were present.

Cardinal Angelo di Pietro, oldest in years of all the Cardinals, died Dec. 5.

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The Kansas City *Register* tells of two little Kansas girls who travelled 48 miles, fasting, partly on foot and partly by rail in order to attend Mass and receive Holy Communion.

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The Holy Father has not merely urged us to help the persecuted Priests and Religious of Mexico; no, he has done more, he has set us the good example. He has sent a substantial contribution with regrets that his poverty prevented him from making it larger.

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Father Doherty, of the Third U. S. Cavalry, has been promoted to the rank of Major. Both Major General Wood and Major General Howze recommended him for promotion on account of his bravery in war and his exceptional efficiency.

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Mrs. Winthrop Rutherford, daughter of former Vice-President Morton, has donated an altar of white Dover marble to the Catholic church at Allamuchy, N. Y.

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President Wilson was unable to keep up the custom of attending the Pan-American Thanksgiving Mass; he wished to visit his daughter.

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The Holy Father, Nov. 16, issued the Encyclical for which the world has been anxiously waiting. It is an appeal for peace—for peace in civil society by the cessation of the present bloody conflict and for peace within the Church by the rejection of the errors embraced by the term, Modernism. The Pope renews the protest against the unlawful occupation of Papal territory by the Italian government.

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The Catholic Workingmen's Mission, Denver, has obtained employment for 2,600 men. The Knights of Columbus of the same city also have an efficient employment bureau.

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The Holy Father's plea for a Christmas armistice has failed "owing to the opposition of a certain power."

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Rev. J. B. Nolin, S. J., died Nov. 23, from injuries received while trying to rescue a workman from a burning building.

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The British government has at last officially recognized the Holy See. Sir Henry Howard has been appointed England's Envoy Extraordinary to the Vatican. Turkey too is seeking to have the Pope receive her representatives.

	The Liguorian Question Box	
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(Address all Questions to Rev. P. Geiermann, C. Ss. R., Oconomowoc, Wis.)

What is the Catholic attitude towards the Bible as we have it today?

As the relationship of the Church to the Bible is divine, her attitude towards it is one of doctrine rather than of policy and so does not change with the vicissitudes of time. The doctrine of the Church on the Bible is: 1) the Bible is the inspired word of God. 2) The Church is the divinely appointed interpreter of the word of God. 3) The Vulgate edition of the Bible substantially contains the word of God. The policy of the Church is: 1) to urge the faithful to read the Bible as interpreted by her, 2) to encourage them to do so by granting indulgences to all who follow this holy practice.

My confessor told me I have a vocation to the religious life, but, as the evangelical counsels are not of obligation I don't like to give up everything and have decided to save my soul in the world. Have I any reason to feel uneasy about my decision?

You remind me of the young man who came to the Savior to find out what to do to attain life everlasting. Jesus not only told him but even invited him to give up everything and become His disciple. If he had generously accepted this invitation the young man might be honored among the Apostles today. Unfortunately he too did not like to give up everything, so he left the Savior. And as no further reference is made to him in the gospel narrative commentators presume that this young man ended badly even though he kept the Commandments in the days of his youth.

You, too, must save or lose your soul during the few years you live on earth, and you can save it only in the way God has destined for you. If He offers you the priceless grace of a religious vocation it will be morally impossible for you to save your soul in the world. At present you honestly intend always to live a good Christian life; but can you do this without God's help? Is it not as presumptuous for you to dictate to the Almighty in what state in life you will serve Him as for

a non-Catholic to dictate to Him how he will pay God the debt of religion in general? God is not dependent on you, but you are dependent on Him. If he has given you a religious vocation God has fitted you by nature for the religious life, intends there to bestow upon you the special dispensations of His Providence, and to give you so great a measure of grace there that the little sacrifices you now must make will be insignificant compared to the happiness and glory you will attain by doing His holy will. In the entire history of the world there is not a single instance recorded where God offered a soul a great grace and was later content to ask little in return. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required." Luke 12, 48.

If the Bible really contains the word of God, why do we need the Church to tell us what that word is?

The necessity of a divine interpreter for the Bible is evident to any impartial mind that gives the subject any serious consideration. There is a divine and a human element in the Bible. The divine element is God's message to man, the human element is the language and style in which this message is clothed. The divine message is clear to God and was made clear by Him to the inspired writer. The human element was contributed partly by the original author and partly by the various translators that have brought the sacred text down to our day. Now, a threefold difficulty in this human element makes it hard for us to discover God's meaning in the sacred text: (1) The original writer as a rule could not express the divine idea as clearly as he saw it himself. (2) The various translators, laboring without the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, found it doubly difficult at times to grasp and to record the word of God. (3) A third difficulty arises from the translation itself, for it frequently happens that certain words of one language have no equivalent expression in another language. Even if the real meaning of the word of God were not obscured by the human ele-

ment in the Bible man's pride, self-will, and selflove would easily prompt him to interpret it to his own advantage if the word of God were left to his private interpretation. For the word of God humbles man by teaching him his absolute dependence on his Maker. It crushes his inordinate self-will by holding him accountable to his supreme Master. And it destroys inordinate selflove by teaching man to love God above everything else.

To safeguard the integrity of His written word God, who saw all these difficulties from the beginning, was bound in justice to Himself, to His word and to man to provide us with a divine interpreter of the Bible. Such an interpreter He has established in the teaching body of the Catholic Church. By this means the Holy Ghost infallibly protects us in holding fast to the original meaning that was in the mind of God when He first inspired men to commit His word to writing.

Is it true that those who make the novena of the nine Fridays can not be lost?

By no means. A novena neither ends your earthly pilgrimage, nor robs you of your free will, nor confirms you in well doing. You no doubt refer to the promise made by our Savior to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque. According to this promise God will give to all who make the novena of the nine Fridays the opportunity and the grace necessary for final repentance. Whether they will avail themselves of this opportunity and co-operate with this grace depends on their own good will.

How much must a boy know before he can be admitted to a seminary? Where should he apply? And how much will his course of studies cost?

Ordinarily a boy ought to have completed the eighth grade in the parochial school before entering the preparatory seminary. If he desires to become a secular priest he should apply to the nearest diocesan seminary after he has consulted his pastor or father confessor. If he desires to enter the ranks of the regular clergy he should make his application to a member of the Order he desires to join. The expenses of an ecclesiastical education will depend on the institution a boy attends as well as on his own wants. Boys of poor parents are usually given special consideration at religious institutions.

What is the best way of getting rid of a bad habit?

The best way of ridding yourself of a bad habit is to resolve firmly to practise the corresponding virtue, to renew this resolution frequently, and to strengthen it by humble, persevering prayer. In particular cases it is well to obtain the advice of your confessor when you go to confession.

Is it a sin to play ball on Sunday?

The Lord's day is both a day of prayer and of recreation. If a boy has assisted devoutly at holy Mass in the morning it is not sinful for him to take part in an innocent game of ball in the afternoon as long as he does not disturb the peace of the entire neighborhood.

If every priest can forgive sin why is it advisable to have a regular confessor?

Besides having the power of forgiving sins as the agent of God's mercy, the priest is also the divinely commissioned guide of souls. As such he has not the omniscience of God, however, and so can direct an honest soul best when he is her regular confessor, even as our family physician can do more for us than one who is a stranger to our needs.

Can you prove that the Precepts of the Church bind under pain of mortal sin?

It is evident from the very nature of the Precepts of the Church that they bind under pain of mortal sin. Instead of being merely positive laws of the Church the Precepts are principles of Catholic life by which we cultivate a personal union with Jesus Christ. As the Decalogue defines man's natural obligations to his Maker, and as the Beatitudes indicate the summit of Christian perfection, so the Precepts define the lowest stage of Catholic life for the brethren of Christ. By not living up to this standard they sever their union with Christ and become dead branches on the tree of life. A personal union with Christ, our Mediator and High Priest, is necessary to worship God properly, to triumph over the flesh, to benefit by God's mercy, to abide in Christ and have a well grounded hope of a glorious resurrection, to have the material means necessary for the practice of religion, and to live in harmony with the Catholic community. And this personal union is maintained only by the observance of the Precepts.

	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Some Good Books</h2>	
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"*The Red Ascent*," by Esther W. Neill, is a true to life story of a young Southerner Dick Matterson, who left the Seminary to redeem his family from poverty. How bravely he toiled, the odds he overcame, the success he achieved justify the title, *The Red Ascent*. Colonel Matterson, a crabbed and unfeeling father, Bessy, a pleasure-seeking, and thoughtless sister are characters well and strongly drawn. The story is Catholic in tone, with much, very much between the lines. Many bright flashes of humor shine through the pages. When wealth comes to the hero in the end, he leaves all to return to his first love. There is not a weary page in the entire book. P. J. Kenedy & Sons. Price, \$1.00.

The gifted religious who writes under the name of Rev. Richard W. Alexander has given us a new book: "*The Hand of Mercy*." This volume contains thirty-two delightful and interesting tales which show the workings of God's mercy within and about us. The lesson taught is a good one and enables us to realize that God's "Hand of Mercy" is ever extended over us, that midst the many mazes and trials of life we are led on to our final destiny by a merciful and unerring hand. The stories are well told and as someone has said "with a distinct literary flavor." The appreciation which Father Elliott, C. S. P. expresses in an introduction is well merited. The book is published by P. J. Kenedy & Sons. Price, \$1.00.

Jesus Christ, Priest and Victim, is a very well made translation of Rev. S. M. Giraud's excellent work. There is art in the get up and in the contents. The exposition of Our Savior's life with its learned commentary will supply its readers with a deeper insight and fuller appreciation of its subject. The translation has been made by W. H. Mitchell, M. A., and is published by Benziger Bros. Price, \$1.50.

Rev. Father Francis P. Donnelly, S. J., has just given us a volume of "Pungent Paragraphs" which he titles "*Mustard Seed*". These "Paragraphs" are substantial little talks on what most people do sometimes and what some people do most times. And we advise our readers to add this volume to their book collection. Each talk is short, not quite four pages, except perhaps the finest essay of all "Faster, Faster," which is a really "pungent" arraignment of our modern speed-craze. The book is nicely bound. It is published by P. J. Kenedy and Sons. Price, 60c.

"*The New Laity and Old Standards*," by Mr. H. J. Desmond is a volume of good, practical advice. It is a stimulant to self-thought, inspiring our Catholic laity to live out active lives in their surroundings faithful to the "Old Standards". The book is published by J. J. McVey. Price, 50c.

The ever increasing number of subscribers to the "*Liguorian*" is but a single evidence of the growing interest among Catholics in Catholic Literature. The custom is becoming general and no better custom of gift giving could be established than that of giving books and subscriptions to periodicals as Xmas presents. You can find books to suit the young or old, the literary fastidious or the plain matter-of-fact reader. The magazine present well chosen suits all and it bears its message of welcome to your friend throughout the year.

Supernatural Merit: Your Treasure in Heaven is a booklet by The Rev. F. J. Remler C. M. It very concisely explains what supernatural merit is and how it is obtained. He shows how our every action can be a source of merit and why it is that that so very many seem to be so very indifferent to the work of hoarding up treasures in heaven. The booklet must appeal to the ordinary reader and no more useful book can be had for negligent Catholics. B. Herder. Price, paper, 15 cents; cloth, 40 cents.



	Lucid Intervals	
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Opposite her in the trolley car was a man who was expectorating freely. Finally the woman hailed the conductor, and asked: "Conductor, do you allow spitting in this car?"

Taken aback for the moment by the unexpected question the conductor recovered himself and said: "Why, not exactly. But go ahead, if you like, Madam."

"Mother, turn the hose on me," said little Willie as his mamma was dressing him in the morning.

"Why, Willie, what in the world do you mean?" cried his alarmed and loving parent.

"Why, you've put my stockings on the wrong side out."

An irate patron of a restaurant called a waiter to him and said, "I found a needle in this soup. What does it mean?"

"Beg pardon," said the waiter, who used to be a proof-reader; "that's a typographical error. It should have been a noodle."

He went into the store to buy his friend a comb for Christmas. He was a Boston man and careful of his grammar and of other folks's grammar. He asked for a man's comb.

"Do you want a narrow man's comb?" asked the clerk.

"No," said the careful grammarian, "I want a comb for a stout man with rubber teeth."

"Every time I see grandfather's sword I want to go to war!"

"Well?"

"Every time I-ah, notice grandfather's wooden leg, I-ah cool down!"

"Harry," said the teacher, "you may give us a sentence in which the word notwithstanding is correctly used."

And Harry, nothing daunted by the size of the word, answered:

"The man wore his pants out, but notwithstanding."

"Do yez remimber thim moth balls yez told me to git to kill moths wid?"

"Oi do."

"They're no good. Oi broke tin dollars worth uv chiney ware and windows throwin' thim little balls at th' moths in our house and Oi never hit one av thim."

"Wouldn't you like another piece of cake dear?" asked the good lady of the urchin at the end of the Christmas dinner.

"No'm, I guess not," said the boy dubiously. "I could chew it, but I couldn't swallow it."

Some good luck had come to him in business that day and he left as if he wanted to share it with others. So when he reached her house and dismissed the station hack with its two sorry horses he joyously handed the driver two dollars.

The driver looked at the money, then at the man, and then at his horses, and finally said:

"All right, sir; which horse do you want?"

"What is it, do you suppose, that keeps the moon in place and prevents it from falling?" asked Araminta.

"I think it must be the beams," replied Charlie, and then he fled.

Greenbaum: I got a turrible bad coldt.

Greenberg: Vhy don't you take something for it?

Greenbaum: How much will you gif me?

A clergyman who advertised for an organist received this reply:

Dear Sir:

I notice you have a vacancy for an organist and music teacher, either lady or gentleman. Having been both for several years I beg to apply for the position.

"Oi'll work no more for that man Dolan."

"An' why?"

"Shure, an' 'tis on account ov a remark he made."

"An' phwat was that?"

"Says he, 'Casey,' says he, 'you're discharged.'"